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## OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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### Media Contact:

### PRESS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

#### **Ban on Drawing Canal or River Water into Ditches in San Juan County Lifted by New Mexico Departments of Environment, Agriculture, and State Engineer *Strategic Plan for Flushing Ditches Initiated Along Animas & San Juan Rivers to Hogback***

**(Aztec, NM)** – New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ryan Flynn, Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte, and State Engineer Tom Blaine today initiated the plan to flush irrigation ditches, in order to reduce the Gold King Mine Spill's potential contamination effects on San Juan County's crops and livestock.

"Today we are initiating a strategic plan for flushing ditches as a safety precaution prior to resuming irrigation," said Blaine. "As part of the Gold King Mine Spill's Long Term Impact Team announced by Governor Susana Martinez this morning, our agencies are approaching this with the same synchronized communication, expertise, and caution used throughout our response."

"We encourage San Juan County Ditch Superintendents to start flushing ditches immediately. Flush from the diversion to the first sluice for 12 hours. All head gates should be closed and only return gates should be open during this flushing operation," said Blaine. "12 hours following flushing, normal irrigation and livestock watering operations may resume." Revised safety precautions concerning the Gold King Mine Spill are posted at [www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org](http://www.NMEDRiverWaterSafety.org).

The operation will begin at the New Mexico state line along the Animas River down to the confluence with the San Juan River. It will include ditches below the San Juan River out to Hogback. Representatives of the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer's Aztec district office are communicating with Ditch Superintendents.

New Mexico agency representatives on the Long Term Impact Review Team for the Gold King Mine Spill (Environment, State Engineer, Agriculture, Game and Fish, Health, Homeland Security, and others), along with the US EPA and local officials, continue assessing the full impact of the August 5<sup>th</sup> event on the state for the development and recommendation of safe practices for the San Juan County region.

The Domestic Water Well ban was lifted earlier today. All water wells within the floodplain have been determined to be safe. Water well testing will continue till noon on Saturday, 8/15/15.

Captain Patrick Young from the U.S. Health Department advised that there are hotlines set up for the public who are concerned that they may be exposed to contaminated water.

Poison Control – 1-800-222-1222 and NM Department of Health – 505-827-000

**Next Public Information Meeting will be Monday at 6pm at the Farmington Civic Center.**

Specialist from the U.S. Environmental Agency, the NM Environmental Department, and NM State Engineers Office will be on hand to explain the results of testing and how decisions to lift the ban on wells and develop a plan to flush irrigation ditches were made.

# # #

Potable water stations for DRINKING WATER ONLY have been set up for residents at the following locations:

Aztec:

less than 100 gallons please

Aztec RV Fill Station – 201 W. Chaco – next to City Hall and the police station

Open all day

In Bloomfield:

Bloomfield Fire Station – 911 N First St.

Monday 8/10/15 - Friday 8/14/15 9:00am – 9:00pm

In Farmington:

Farmington Fire Station #6 – 3101 West Main St.

Sycamore Park Community Center – 1051 Sycamore St.

Monday 8/10/15 – Friday 8/14/15 8:00am - 8:00pm

Bring your own drinking water containers. No large tanks.

**LIVESTOCK AND RV WATER STATIONS**

San Juan County Livestock – East of the Hogback – Livestock Evacuations/Emergency Water Delivery

New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service –

505-334-9496

Navajo Nation – West of the Hogback –

Livestock Evacuations/Emergency Water Delivery

Navajo Nation Livestock – 505-368-1037 or 928-871-7891

NAPI Non-Potable Water Fill Station

A map of the location can be found at [www.navajopride.com](http://www.navajopride.com)

Jeremy Simpson 505-427-1843

As more information becomes available, updates will be sent out via media releases and on Facebook at the following locations:

San Juan County Office of Emergency Management ([www.sjcoem.com](http://www.sjcoem.com) and on Facebook – San Juan County Office of Emergency Management)

San Juan County Government ([www.sjcounty.net](http://www.sjcounty.net) and facebook – San Juan County, New Mexico. Government)

City of Farmington ([www.fmtn.org](http://www.fmtn.org) and [www.facebook.com/cityoffarmingtonnm](https://www.facebook.com/cityoffarmingtonnm))

Farmington Fire Department ([www.facebook.com/Farmingtonfire](https://www.facebook.com/Farmingtonfire))

Farmington Police Department ([www.facebook.com/farmingtonpolicedepartmentnm](https://www.facebook.com/farmingtonpolicedepartmentnm))

City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices ([www.aztecmn.gov](http://www.aztecmn.gov) and facebook – City of Aztec Municipal Government Offices)

NMSU Cooperative Extension Service 505-334-9496

NMED web site [www.nmedriverwatersafety.org](http://www.nmedriverwatersafety.org)

US EPA web site [http://epaossc.org/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=11082](http://epaossc.org/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=11082)